



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Adjustments to 2011-2012 Recreational Annual Catch Limit for Black Sea Bass in the South Atlantic

On January 31, 2011, NOAA Fisheries Service implemented a final rule establishing commercial and recreational annual catch limits and accountability measures for black sea bass. Annual catch limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing (population is too low). Accountability measures include in-season closures and annual catch limit adjustments during the next fishing year to recover any overages from the prior fishing year.

NOAA Fisheries Service monitored recreational black sea bass landings and projected that the 2010-2011 annual catch limit would be met and recreational harvest closed on February 12, 2011. When final recreational landings data for the 2010-2011 fishing year became available, it was determined that the annual catch limit was exceeded by 67,253 lb. Therefore, this rulemaking adjusts the **2011-2012 recreational annual catch limit from 409,000 lb to 341,747 lb** to make up for the 67,253 lb overage.

It is anticipated that the adjusted recreational annual catch limit will be met in mid-to-late October 2011. Available landings for June-August indicate 64 percent of the annual catch limit has been caught. NOAA Fisheries Service expects to announce when

the recreational fishing season for black sea bass will close within the next week, and will give fishers ten days notice of the exact closure date.

Background

Black sea bass are overfished, and experiencing overfishing (rate of removal is too high). The commercial quota is 309,000 pounds, and the recreational annual catch limit is being adjusted from 409,000 pounds to 341,747 pounds to account for the recreational overage during the 2010-2011 fishing year. The commercial sector was closed on July 15, 2010, because the commercial quota of 309,000 pounds was projected to be met by that date. Harvest levels must be kept below these annual catch levels to prevent overfishing from occurring, and to rebuild the black sea bass population. Annual catch limits and accountability measures are requirements of the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

More Information

For more information please refer to [Amendment 17B Frequently Asked Questions](#), [Black Sea Bass Frequently Asked Questions](#), or the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web page at: www.safmc.net.